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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-third session
Agenda items 39, 40 and 84
QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE
TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES
AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE
PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS
OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 5 August 1999 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Israeli occupying army announced its intentions, which it said reflected the opinion of Prime Minister Ehud Barak, to allow 27 of the 31 settler encampments that were set near existing settlements on "grabbed" hilltops since the signing of the Wye River Memorandum to remain intact. While all settlements are illegal under international law, those new encampments are particularly shocking in the context of the ongoing peace process and the agreements reached between the two sides.

This most unfortunate development comes as the first Israeli concrete reaction to the Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention on Measures to Enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, which was held, as recommended by the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, at Geneva on 15 July 1999. The Conference, the first of its kind in the history of the Convention, "reaffirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem", and "reiterated the need for full respect for the provisions of the said Convention in that Territory".

For the occupying Power, which is a High Contracting Party itself, to continue with such serious violations of the Convention is a matter of grave concern and calls for further action by the High Contracting Parties to the Convention. In the statement issued by the Conference, the participating High Contracting Parties adjourned the Conference "on the understanding that it will

convene again in the light of consultations on the development of the humanitarian situation in the field". This recent Israeli violation, if not reversed, indeed requires serious consideration and follow-up by the High Contracting Parties.

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as an official document of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly under agenda items 39, 40 and 84, as well as of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dr. Nasser AL-KIDWA
Ambassador, Permanent Observer of Palestine
to the United Nations